

Sinclair Broadcasting is threatening the very basis of fair public communication--for which they receive a license that costs them nothing and allows them to make a huge amount of money, but with a RESPONSIBILITY to the country. Sinclair is trying to force its stations to air a one-sided, so-called "documentary" just days before a hotly disputed presidential election.

A program like "Stolen Honor" is anything but fair; the title alone indicates that it is one-sided propaganda (this one happens to be anti-Kerry, but I would be just as strongly opposed to a similar one-sided view of Bush at this time). No one who honors the free flow of information in American society should be willing to stand for an enforced presentation of a thoroughly one-sided view, particularly as this EXPLICITLY contradicts the terms of Sinclair's broadcasting license.

Sinclair's behavior in this matter is a clear example of the dangers of media consolidation.

As a licensee, Sinclair is obligated by law to serve the public interest. But Sinclair's action is clearly in its own perceived SELF-INTEREST, not the public interest. When large companies control the airwaves, we get more of what's good for the bottom line and less of what we need for our democracy.

Sinclair's actions show why we need to strengthen media ownership rules, not weaken them. They show why the license renewal process needs to involve more than a returned postcard. License renewals DEMAND a serious investigation into the way that the licensee has behaved, and particularly (in these times) whether the licensee has pushed a single political view without the opportunity of rebuttal.

If there is any way that Sinclair can be stopped in this intended action of insisting that all of its stations broadcast a one-sided piece of propaganda--whether through FCC order, or public shaming, or some other means--it ought to be done.

Thank you.

Steven Ledbetter